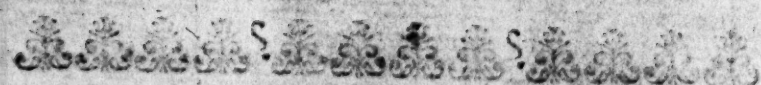


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FATAL LEGACY
TRAGEDY

THE
FATAL LEGACY:
A
TRAGEDY.

(Price 1 s. 6 d.)



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FATAL LEGACY:
A
TRAGEDY.



(Price 1s. 6d.)

THE
FATAL LEGACY;
A
TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the
THEATRE-ROYAL
IN

Lincolns-Inn Fields.

Sæva en Discordia Fratrum !



L O N D O N :

Printed for E. SYMON, at the Corner of *Pope's-
Head Alley* in *Cornhill* ; J. ROBERTS, near the
Oxford-Arms in *Warwick-Lane* ; and A. DODD,
at the *Peacock*, without *Temple-Bar*. 1723.

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THE
FATAL LEGACY

A

TRAGEDY.

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FROM THE BEQUEST OF

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THEATRE

IN

Lincoln-Inn Fields.

Scenes on Discontinuation



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Printed for E. Symon, at the Corner of Pope's
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at the Pancake, without Temple-Bar. 1723.



TO
THOMAS COKE,
Of Norfolk, Esq;

SIR,



HIS Tragedy was
writ by a young
Lady, and entrust-
ed to my Management ;
I introduc'd it into the
A 3 Play-

Play-house for her Interest, and take the Freedom of making Choice of you for a Patron, for her Reputation. Whatever cold Encouragement it met with upon the Stage, I am induc'd, from the Opinion of several good Judges who perus'd it before it came there, to believe it might very reasonably be attributed to the Season of the Year, which was a little too far advanc'd to afford much Success to any Entertainments of this kind: It may probably, the next Winter, (when the Manager
of

Dedication. vii

of the Theatre has agreed to let it try its Fortune again) appear to a greater Advantage. The Four First Acts are taken chiefly from *Racine*; but the Last is (excepting a few Lines) entirely new.

I rather chuse to trouble your Patience with something of this kind, than according to the common Form of Dedications, tire both that, and your Modesty, in enumerating those valuable Qualities the World is already fully satisfied you are possesst of. If our Country loves you for the Blood which

you

you derive from your
Great Predecessor the
Lord Chief Justice *Coke*,
who (by the Labours he
took to strengthen the Ba-
sis of our Constitution by
such sound Maxims of
Law, as make us, not only
happy among our selves,
but envy'd by all other
Nations) has left himself
a Name that will never
be forgotten, till *Britain*
can desert his Precepts,
and be unjust: If for his
Sake then we love you,
how much greater Affe-
ction should we, and in-
deed have we for you on
your own Account, when
we

we see (tho' shining in other Lights) the illustrious Patriot so worthily continued? Your Country, from an Hope of being enrich'd by the Improvements you should make, ventur'd you forth to travel; and that Hope was largely answer'd at your Return. Nor were you satisfy'd with deserving our Esteem by these Means, till you had shewn the Delicacy of your Judgment by your Alliance in Marriage to a Family that is high in Rank, and gives place to none for the only Virtues

B

and

and the only Graces that
can ennoble it.

I fear, Sir, my Zeal has
transported me to exceed
those Limits I had at first
propos'd to confine my-
self to; and shall there-
fore, to avoid giving the
least Offence, be content
with the Honour of sub-
scribing myself,

S I R,

Your most Obedient,

And most Devoted

Humble Servant.



PROLOGUE,

Written by Mr. BECKINGHAM,
and spoken by Mr. WALKER.



*THE Task of Learning is to search
Mankind,
And one chief Lot to Poetry's as-
sign'd;
Deep-vers'd in Arts, the moralizing
Sage,
With rigid Maxims swells the labour'd
Page:
The Sons of Verse in freer Strains im-
part
The useful Beauties of their deathless
Art:*

*They even Time's defacing Hand subdue,
 Redeem great Heroes past, to model new.
 Wake Freedom's bold Assertors from the
 Grave,*

*To shew that Death itself wants
 Pow'r t'enlave,
 Or shadow the vast Fame their godlike
 Actions gave.*

*Let Tyrants rule, or Factions basely storm,
 At their enliv'ning Call, the Dead re-
 form;*

*The Patriot and the Bondsman plead
 their Claim*

To second Glory, or to second Shame.

*Our Author dares these dang'rous Heights
 pursue,*

*But, Fair-Ones, for Success, relies on you.
 To the Stern Critick's Spleen we scorn to
 trust,*

*You're the best Judges, you are ever just.
 A Maiden Muse here makes her bold
 Essay,*

If Beauty be her Shield, she wins the Day.

*The present swelling Scene of Woe dis-
 plays,*

*In all its Stretch of Guilt, Ambition's
 Blaze;*

Shews

*Shews, how two rash, two glitt'ring Sons
of Earth*

*Ignobly plead the Merit of their Birth;
With impious Arms, and rival Claims
contend*

*For Empire, neither can with Worth
ascend.*

*These Themes afford but Wonder to your
Eyes,*

*More tender Objects to your Pity rise :
Behold a Mother and a Queen appears
Majestick thro' the Weight of Grief and
Years !*

*Behold her o'er her bleeding Kingdom
mourn !*

*Her Royal Breast with Patriot Anguish
torn !*

*She sees her Offspring's Guilt, her Coun-
try's Sore,*

*Her Sons she pities much, her People
more.*

*Ne'er can such Pangs as these (we hope)
appear*

Ungrateful Subjects to a British Ear.

Our

*Our Clime's Security we boast in vain,
Fenc'd with the Rocks, and girded with
the Main;
'Tis our own Zeal must guard the happy
Coast,
Its Bulwarks sink indeed, when that
great Ardor's lost.*



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Eteocles</i> , King of <i>Thebes</i> .		Mr. <i>Boheme</i> .
<i>Polynices</i> , his Brother.		Mr. <i>Ryan</i> .
<i>Creon</i> , Uncle to the	} In Love with	{ Mr. <i>Quin</i> .
Two Princes.		
<i>Phocias</i> , Son to <i>Creon</i> .	<i>Antigona</i> .	Mr. <i>Walker</i> .
<i>Alcander</i> .		Mr. <i>Smith</i> .
<i>Attalus</i> .		Mr. <i>Egleton</i> .

W O M E N.

<i>Jocasta</i> , Mother to the 2 Princes.	Mrs. <i>Boheme</i> .
<i>Antigona</i> , her Daughter, in Love	} Mrs. <i>Bullock</i> .
with <i>Phocias</i> .	
<i>Olympa</i> , Attendant on the Ladies.	Mrs. <i>Purden</i> .

Officers, Guards, Attendants, &c.

S C E N E,

An Apartment in the Royal Palace.



THE
FATAL LEGACY:
A
TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter Jocasta, Olympa, and Alcander.

JOCASTA.



URE, my *Olympa*, Heaven's
afflicting Hand
Will ne'er withdraw its Rage;
these Eyes are doom'd
The constant Outlets of a Sea of
Sorrow.

If by kind Chance one Moment of Repose
Relieves my tortur'd Thoughts, reviv'd Distress
Returns

C

18 *The FATAL LEGACY.*

Returns as constant as revolving Light ;
 Sleep only shuts my Eyes to rack my Soul
 With new Ideas of Eternal Woe.
 But let 'em be for ever, ever clos'd,
 Rather than wink at such enormous Crimes !
 But are they yet engag'd ?——

Alcan. From off the Tower,
 I saw 'em in a dire Battalia rang'd ;
 I saw the martial Steel advanc'd in Air,
 I saw it dart around its glittering Horror.
 The bold *Eteocles*, with Sword in Hand,
 March'd in the Van, and breathing Death and
 Blood,
 Shew'd his victorious Troops the Path for
 Slaughter.

Joc. 'Tis as I fear'd, *Olympa* ; let me haste
 And stop this Scene of Fratricide. Ye Gods,
 Will these relentless Brothers never end
 Their impious Combat ? Do I call 'em Sons,
 Yet have not Power t'arrest their guilty Swords,
 And awe them into Amity ? I will
 Or soon disjoin, or perish by their Rage.
 Why dost thou lend thy Beams, O God of Day,
 To shine on Murther, and assist their Crimes ?
 And can'st thou see what we are forc'd to see
 Unpitying, unalarm'd ? Alas, alas,
 These things are Prodigies no more ; the Blood
 of *Laius*

Has made 'em common, and diminish'd Wonder.
 Unshock'd thou may'st indeed survey these Scenes
 Of filial Crimes, they but succeed in course
 To their detested Parents monstrous Guilt.
 Did they not spring from an incestuous Bed ?
 To cease these Contests, and be virtuous Men,
 They must degenerate, and belye their Race.

Enter

Enter Antigona.

Alas, my Daughter, are you come to share
The dreadful News?

Ant. Already have I heard
The fierce Alarms, and tremble for th' Event.

Joc. Then let us go, my dear *Antigona*,
Let's go and stop the now descending Swords:
Let's go and try with all the Eloquence
Of Eyes, Laments, and Tears, if they'll with-

stand
The warm Entreaties of their kneeling Kindred;
If in their Height of Villany they'll take
The Blood of those who plead to save their own.

Ant. Madam, 'tis now the Time, behold the
King.

Enter Eteocles and Creon.

Joc. Help me, *Olympa*, swelling Grief o'er-
whelms me.

Eteoc. Whence, Madam, do these Agonies
proceed?

Joc. My Son, my Son, what spotted o'er
with Blood!
Your Brother's! Ah! Or is it not your own?

Eteoc. No, Madam, neither's.
As yet I have not met with *Polynices*:
For Skirmishes, the Shadows of a War,
Have only pass'd between us. The *Argives*
Sent from their Camp a large Detachment forth,

20 *The FATAL LEGACY.*

Whose Orders were to lie before our Walls,
Close us within, or else dispute our Passage.
I level'd 'em all prostrate on the Dust,
And made 'em bite the Ground, and fretting die.
Theirs is the Blood that caus'd your Fears for
me.

Joc. But whence is your Design to head your
Army?

What's this new Motion that so much alarms me?

Eteoc. Madam, 'tis time to rouse the Lion now,
To draw the Sword in earnest, and in Blood
To plead my Cause, till Fate resolves to fix
This much-disputed Crown upon my Head,
And bids me reign unrival'd and alone;
And now 'tis Glory lost to tarry here:
I've been too tame to screen my self with Walls;
I'm all on fire, and burn to meet my Foe,
Keen for the Field, and resolute for Blood.
Yes, *Polynices* shall repent his Taunt,
When to my *Theban* Troops, with haughty Scorn,
He loudly ridicul'd this lurking Fight;
Told 'em I gave to Slaughter those that crown'd
me,

The People, whom the Dread of Famine seiz'd,
By Whispers of my Cowardice, betray'd,
They credited too well the vile Reproach.
They saw, with Curses and regretting Hearts,
The Royal Dignity bestow'd on one
Unable to support the tottering Weight.
This day my Sword shall undeceive the *Thebans*,
This hostile Brother, with his fierce Allies,
Shall, or draw off from our insulted Walls,
Or dye them with his Blood the next Assault.

Joc. Heav'ns, Heav'ns forbid so dire a Victory!
Thebes would not see such execrable Conquests.
Think not, O think not she will owe her
Safety

To

The FATAL LEGACY. 21

To Methods so abhor'd, continu'd War
Would be less dreadful to her Sons than Peace
Bought by the Guilt of such detested Terms.
And has a Crown such Charms that you would
stab
The Heart of Nature to attain it, wade
To dear-bought Empire thro' a Sea of Blood?
A Brother's Blood too? If 'tis Honour spurs
you

To give your Country the expected Peace,
'Tis in your Breast t'approve yourself her Patron;
Be great without th' Assistance of a Crime:
Content your Brother, and securely reign.

Eteoc. What call you reigning? to forgo my
Crown,

And to present my Rival with a Throne,
Which People, Blood and Fate assign'd my Lot?

Joc. You know, my Son, that Blood and
Justice both

Have shar'd the Crown to him as well as you.
For wretched *Oedipus*, in Life's last Scene,
Ordain'd, that each alternately should wield
The Scepter for a Year: Both were his Heirs,
And since he had but one Estate to leave you,
He order'd that you both should thus be Kings.
To these Conditions each of you subscrib'd;
Your Lot was first to mount the Throne: you
did:

Without Regret he waited till your Year
Of Empire was expir'd: and will you now
With-hold th' allotted Scepter from his Hand?

Eteoc. No, Madam, no, his Thoughts of
Crowns and Empire

Are but Chimæras, golden Vapours, born
Of sickly Dreams, or issu'd from the Moon,
That plays upon the Brain, and figures Diadems.

Thebes

22 *The* FATAL LEGACY.

Thebes is resolv'd to shake off his Pretence ;
And when th' ambitious Boy first claim'd her
Throne,

'Twas *Thebes*, and not *Eteocles* that check'd
His Arrogance, and spurn'd the Stripling off.
Has she not Reason for her Caution, Grounds
To dread his future Tyranny when King,
Who, whilst a Subject, is esteem'd her Scourge,
And arms against her Famine and the Sword ?

Joc. Who first provok'd his Vengeance ? Yet
allow him

But the Succession that he claims by Right,
And he may prove his Country's Blessing.

Eteoc. Yes,

Thebes must expect vast Blessings from a King,
Who would ascend her Throne by foreign
Troops,

Greedy Allies, and mercenary Aid,
Bought by the Mortgage of his future Empire :
Has he not farther ty'd a Gordian Knot
Insoluble as Fate with open Foes ?

When *Argos*' King admitted *Theban* Blood
To join with his in Hymeneal Rites,
The Prospect that he had, was *Thebes* in Ashes.
Love ! 'Twas not Love kindl'd the Nuptial
Torch,

But some *Tisiphone* that furnish'd Flame
And Sulphur, and attended 'em to Bed.

Thebes, to avoid his Chains, assign'd her Crown
To me, and if I violate my Word,
Impute the Fault to her who forc'd the Breach.

Joc. Base and ungrateful, proud and impious
Heart !

Own, own it rather, 'tis the Diadem
That dazzles and allures your guilty Eyes.
But I mistake, 'tis not the Dignity,

But

But an Ambition to be greatly wicked,
That makes you thus inexorable : see,
Since you delight in heaping Crime on Crime,
A double Parricide is offer'd you ;
Glut, glut your Malice in your Brother's Blood,
And if that proves too little for your Thirst,
Compleat the Feast with mine : you then will
meet

No Obstacle, no Rival to the Throne ;
You'll shine alone inimitably black,
And stand the foremost in th' infernal Annals.

Eteoc. Well then, your Counsel is, I must, to
prove

My Country's Patriot, be my Brother's Slave.

Jac. O Heavens ! How much you wrong my
just Design !

I ask not that you abdicate the Throne ;
No, no, maintain it with eternal Honour
To *Thebes*, and to yourself : But if you bear
The least Compassion for a Mother's Woes,
Vouchsafe my Tears this Boon, and deign
t' admit

Your Brother Partner in th' Imperial Sway.
If Fame be all your Search, you purchase here
Substantial Glory, and unmatch'd Renown.
This noble Condescension in the Eye
Of wondring Nations, leaves the lessen'd Crown
No Lustre to adorn your Partner's Head.
Th' applauding People will forget the Gods,
To pay their Thanks to you ; your Brother then
Thus vanquish'd, thus oblig'd, with equal Envy
Will view your Virtues as your Empire now.

Enter

Enter Attalus.

Eteoc. Soldier, I read Confusion in your Looks.

Att. Your Majesty's Departure sets the Town
In th' utmost Anguish; *Thebes* is drown'd in
Tears.

Despair and Horror rage thro' every Quarter :
The Troops and Citizens that guard the Ram-
parts

Stand motionless as Statues at the News.

Eteoc. I'll go and hush th' imaginary Feud,
And calm their Fears. Now, Madam, to the
Army :

Yet in Obedience to your Will, I grant
That *Polynices* come with Safety to you.

The Queen supplies my Absence in Command :
Creon, let *Artaban* attend my Mother,
And execute her Orders. [Exit.]

Cre. What, Madam, have your rash Suggestions
done ?

And would you force a Conqueror to yield ?
This Counsel is all Ruin.

Joc. Creon, no :
This Counsel only can restore to *Thebes*
The Calm her harrafs'd Sons have wish'd so long.

Cre. What, when ten thousand added Troops
recruit

Our smiling Cause; what now, when every God
Seems to present the Laurel to his Brow,
When Conquest courts him, would you have
the King

Transfer the proffer'd Blessing to another ?

Joc.

The FATAL LEGACY. 25

Joc. Blessing ! Oh monstrous Statesman ! canst thou count

A Conquest back'd with such a Train of Crimes,
As must attend *Eteocles'* Success,
A Blessing ? *Creon*, Oh ! when Brothers war,
Not to employ a reconciling Arm,
Is to be guilty of the Deaths their Rage
Points at each other's Hearts, and murder both.
You're his best valu'd Friend, and can you worse
Repay that Trust, or can you wrong him more
Than thus fomenting his ambitious Heat,
To grasp at Laurels that will taint his Name,
And sink him into Infamy for ever ?

Cre. Their Rage is too far gone.

Joc. It may be calm'd.

Cre. They both would reign.

Joc. Why then they both shall reign.

Cre. Impossible ! This fatal Legacy

By which these rival Brothers claim the Crown,
Confounds the Nature of all Government.

That Nation that beholds two Partner-Kings
Mount her divided Throne, foresees with Horror
A dreadful Age of Tyranny and Blood ;
Like Planets that shoot thwart th' affrighted
Sky,

And fiercely mingle their contending Beams,
They shake that Empire that they war to sway.
The annual Reign which this Prescription
bounds,

Augments the Violence 'twas made to check.

Joc. They'll rather strive by emulous Designs
To win their Subjects to a willing Yoke.

O *Creon*, think your Projects vanish all,
Vanish they will ; this Peace your Malice
thwarts,

If it succeeds, will shew you as you are,

D

And

And fix you deeper in the People's Hate.
 My Sons with just Resentment will perceive
 Who widen'd their Divisions, see those Arts
 Those crooked Counsels that have kept their
 Swords

So long unsheath'd in struggling for a Crown,
 Your Politicks have plann'd to make your own.
 By that too near Affinity of Blood
 Which joins you to my Sons, you see but two,
 Two Lives to distance your ambitious Hopes :
 And *Creon*'s Statesman qualify'd enough
 To shorten such a Prospect.

Cre. These unjust,
 Causeless Suspicions wound not in the least
 A Mind so strong in Innocence as mine.
 If you accuse me of Ambition, 'tis
 Ambition to preserve my Sovereign's Love :
 Ambition to maintain him on that Throne
 To which your Fears suggested, I aspir'd :
 If this be urg'd against me, as a Crime,
 I plead this Instant guilty, and confess
 There's not a greater Criminal in *Thebes*.

Joc. O perfect Master of Hypocrisy !
 The Wreck of Princes, and the Bane of Courts.
 Howe'er thy Boastings of dissembl'd Love,
 That Veil of rankest Falshood, may abuse
 The blinded King, *Jocasta* wants not Eyes
 To trace thro' all the Windings of thy Arts,
 And see Betrayer thro' the vile Disguise. [*Exit.*]

Cre. Whate'er these Transports of your Mo-
 ther's Rage
 Would urge against my Loyalty, I hope
 The fair *Antigona* bears milder Thoughts.

Ant. If as a Parent, her loud Grief upbraids
 With Justice him that sets her Sons in Arms,
 Believe you, *Creon*, that a Sister's Breast

Should

Should be less anxious for her Brother's Fate?
 You are a Father, Father to a Son
 As brave as faithful to the weaker Cause
 Of *Polynices*: Will you then foment
 A War that keeps his Virtue still your Foe?

Cre. I ought to make Distinction, I confess,
 Betwixt the Son and Foe: He stands against
 me

Rebellious and undutiful in Arms.
 But I have stronger Reasons for my Hate:
 Reasons for lasting Hate; and Oh! I wish
 That all would hate him equal to his Father.

Ant. Are you then deaf to all that Nature
 pleads?

Cre. The more I ought to love the Son, the
 more
 I hate the Criminal.

Ant. And should a Father thus
 Harbour Resentment that admits no Bounds?

Cre. And should a Lady be so wondrous good
 In interceeding in a Rebel's Cause?

Ant. His Innocence engag'd me on his side.

Cre. I know what makes him innocent with
 you.

Ant. And I, what renders you as much ab-
 hor'd.

Creon, I know the publick Interest shares
 But little of your Breast, there is a Fire
 Beyond the Patriot's Zeal, that keeps your Son
 So distant from your Heart, I know and scorn it;
 And 'tis your Prudence to conceal your Flame.

Cre. I will conceal it, Madam: farther still
 My Absence shall oblige this favourite Son
 With an Occasion to repay with Thanks
 The kind Concerns you shew'd on his Behalf.

[Exit.
Oly.

Oly. To what an Height his Insolence arose !

Ant. His Pride and Insolence retort upon him.

For if the *Theban* Miseries have reach'd,

The Notice of the Stars, the Peace will make

Amends for all, and give us full Revenge.

And Oh, ye Gods, if an unspotted Flame

Meets with regard above, restore, restore

My Life, my Soul, my *Phocias* to my Love!

Why did I drive him from me, wherefore cause

That Absence I deplore ? Alas, alas,

How Custom makes us Tyrants to ourselves !

With a forc'd Scorn a Lover's Pains we see,

Yet sharpest feel those Tortures we decree :

With a reluctant Tyranny we fly,

And want ourselves that Pity we deny.

[*Exeunt.*]



ACT



ACT II.

Enter Phocias and Antigona.

Pho. ND will you, cruel Fair! so
soon deprive
My Eyes of the sole Joy that
can repay

The bitter Penance that my Love sustain'd,
In Absence from those Charms a tedious Year?

Ant. Would you advise me, *Phocias*, to forget
A Sister's Office, and neglect the Joys
Due to my Brother on his safe Return,
And the sweet Prospect of approaching Peace,
T' attend the Addresses of a Lover's Tale?

Pho. Why, Madam, do you seek so many
Bars

To distance me from Happiness? Why now,
When all flows easy, each relenting God
With-calls his heavy Anger, and fair Peace
That has so long been banish'd from our Walls,
Comes

Comes with a smiling Grace triumphant home :
 When every *Theban* has such Cause for Joy,
 Why will you render, by your fierce Disdain,
 The Triumph tasteless unto me alone ?
 Need I remind you, as my Merit's Plea,
 Of my Obedience to your harsh Commands ?
 How, to oblige your Cruelty, I went
 A sad, despairing Exile from your Eyes,
 I follow'd *Polynices*' weaker Cause,
 Rebell'd against my Country and my Father,
 To give a Proof of Loyalty to you ?

Ant. And is this, *Phocias*, this a generous Part,
 T' upbraid my seeming Coldness with your
 Boasts

Of ill-requited Services ? I own
 When first this Legacy of Discord drew
 My Brothers to the Field, my Pity then
 To injur'd *Polynices*' ravish'd Right,
 Urg'd you to animate the Youngest's Cause :
 That you obey'd my Wishes, I confess ;
 But you, too big with these Deserts, were
 loth
 To leave th' Acknowledgment for me to pay.

Pho. Reproach me not, *Antigona*, with this
 Injurious Charge ; if I have rashly err'd,
 Believe 'twas too much Love that made me err :
 You know I love you, love you with a Flame
 That burns impatient of the least Repulse.
 If that be Criminal, I own the Guilt,
 Own it, and glory in offending so.

Ant. Force not my Blushes, *Phocias*, to declare

I struggle to reject your Vows in vain,
 I wish'd, my *Phocias*, wish'd that you might
 suffer ;
 And that in Absence some invading Gloom
 Might

The FATAL LEGACY. 31

Might make the Day seem tedious to your
Pains :

But don't resent it, for my suffering Heart
Wish'd you no more than what I felt myself.

Pho. And does the Princess of my Soul con-
fess

That I've been absent to so fair Account,
Drove from your Eyes to triumph in your Heart?
Who would not for a Price like this rebel?
Who would repine to lose a Father's Love,
To have thy Beauties in the rich Exchange?

Ant. Forward the Peace, and re-unite my
Brothers,
And in requital for the generous Work,
Your Love obtains its utmost Hope.



Enter Alcander.

———Alas!

Thy Looks, *Alcander*, speak some dreadful News.
What is it that the Oracles declare?

Alc. Ah, Madam, ah!

Ant. What is it they pronounce?

Is't War, *Alcander*?

Alc. Ah! 'tis worse, 'tis worse.

Pho. What's then the heavy Wrath they have
against us?

Alc. Your Highness may collect it from their
Answer.

'Tis this— 'O *Thebans*, if you'd end your Wars,
' The Fates irrevocably have ordain'd
' The youngest of the Royal Stem must die,
' And with his Blood impurple *Thebes*.'

Ant.

32 *The FATAL LEGACY.*

Ant. Ye Gods !

Why did ye then create this wretched Line ?
And has your Rage condemn'd us altogether ?
Were you not fated with my Father's Death,
But must we all be butcher'd to appease you ?

Pho. Madam, this Sentence cannot strike at
you ;

You're not the Victim that the Stars demand:
The Gods know how to shelter Innocence.

Ant. 'Tis not, my *Phocias*, that I dread their
Vengeance

For my own sake ; my Innocence would be
Too weak a Guard, I'm *Oedipus's* Daughter,
And I must die because of *Oedipus*.
I wait without regret the fatal Stroke ;
But should I tell the Source of all my Fear,
You'll find, my *Phocias*, 'tis for you I fear.
You sprung from this unhappy wretched Blood,
As well as I, and I too plain discern
That you are destin'd for a Victim too :
You have the fatal Honour of Alliance,
You've Reason to lament your dangerous Birth,
And envy a Plebeian Parentage.

Pho. Who would repent his Privilege to a
Death

That looks so fair, so lovely in my Eyes,
It charms Ambition to its wish'd Embrace ?

Ant. Yet, *Phocias*, are you not so near ally'd,
But Heaven might let his Offspring's Blood
suffice

To pay the dreadful fated Score of Vengeance
My Father's guilty Ignorance entail'd.
But I foresee another Cause, my *Phocias* ;
My Love, this fatal Love unites our Woes,
More than the Guilt of *Oedipus*, the Blood
Of *Laius*, or all else the Stars alledge.

Pho.

Pho. Why, Madam, why this Fear? What
is't a Crime

To adore a Beauty so divinely Fair?
Since you have deign'd to authorize my Love,
What can create the Rage of those above?

When first I nourish'd my presumptuous Flame,
And gaz'd upon your Charms with wishing
Eyes,

Your Glances gave my Soul so fierce an Awe,
That more I dreaded to incur your Frown,
Than all the angry Terrors of the Skies.

Let all the Stars conspire against me, let
The Constellations turn to *Saturnus* all,
They strive in vain to shake my settled Love.

Dispose of me, ye Gods, howe'er you please,
My great Engagements bravely I'll maintain,
Zealous for Death, in *Polynices'* Cause,

To sacrifice my Blood; more zealous still
To die, my dear *Antigona*, to die
For you, before you, and to warm your Knees

With my expiring, faithful, loving Breath,
And take your Orders when I mount the Stars.

Ant. Alas, what says my *Phocias* he would
do?

Pho. In this Confusion what would you ad-
vise?

I can resolve on nought but noble Death.
In vain the Gods would trifle Time away,
Distance my Tomb, and keep me from the Grave.

Despair will soon supply me with my End—
But see, my Father's Presence bids us hence.
(*Exeunt.*)

E

Enter



Enter Creon.

Cre. With how much Haste he strives to 'scape
my Eyes!

Is't from Abhorrence of his Father's Guilt;
Or from a gloomy Knowledge of his own?
I'm plunging to a damning Depth indeed
If he detects my Aim, and hates me first.
Sure my ambitious *Dæmon* guides me wrong;
If the great Motive of my ripening Schemes
Is shadow'd with such penetrable Veils,
That this hot Boy-sees thro' it with Disdain.
Heroes and Statesmen are of different Molds;
The first, in Confidence of Merit bold,
Bear their Pretensions open to the World,
Nor know a stronger Claim than Valour gives;
Their Sword, their Reason, Policy and Guide:
The Instruments the Statesman's Skill employs,
To execute the Ruin he projects.
My Royal Nephews, at each other's Throats
Demand the *Theban* Throne with lifted Swords:
And let these thoughtless Rivals still proceed
To make their Claims in Blood; this Brace of
Heroes

Combat, and know it not, on my Behalf.
I seem to favour one, yet hate 'em both,
And meditate from both to snatch the Crown.—
The Queen and *Polynices*! let him take
This short Advantage of the Truce, he shall
not

Continue long a quiet Guest in *Thebes*. [*Exit.*

Enter

The FATAL LEGACY. 35

Enter Jocasta, Polynices, Phocias,
Antigona.

Pol. Madam, I see that Peace has wing'd
away ;

Partial *Astræa* has forlook her Throne,
And quits the Cognizance of Things below.
Why does the silent Goddess else forbear
To launch her Magazines of Flame and Rage
Against despotick swelling Tyranny ?
Does she not yet regret these Streams of Blood,
This sanguine Deluge that discolours all
The *Theban* Floods ? And is't not time at last
To give the guilty Sword of Discord Pause,
And fix the Case of this disputed Crown ?
Since thus the Stars are byas'd to my Wrong,
Can I have room to hope a factious People
Will lend an Ear of Reason to my Right ?
Shall I resign my Cause to Tumult's hands,
And make a Statesman, and th' unthinking
Crowd
The Umpires of my Claim ? I've felt too long
Their Insolence and Rage ; they know I'm in-
jur'd,

And are too jealous of my just Revenge,
To yield to give me back my ravish'd Throne.

Joc. And if, as 'tis too true, the *Thebans*
dread

The threaten'd Woes of your revengeful Reign,
Why would you seek the Throne thro' Seas of
Blood,

And strive to sway a Nation that abhors
Your impious Maxims, and disowns your Claim ?

36 *The FATAL LEGACY.*

Pol. Who gives the People Privilege to chuse,
Or to reject a King, as Humour serves,
Or the Moon sways them in the wild Caprice?
Like giddy Eddies, let the madding Throng
Whirl here and there at pleasure of the Wind,
'Tis Right, 'tis Justice mounts us to a Throne,
And whom they love not, they must learn to
dread.

Joc. You'll be a Tyrant hated by your Realms.

Pol. Madam, that barbarous Title suits not
me;

My Right protects me from the odious Name:

'Tis not their Hatred makes the Tyrant; no,
Tyrant to their *Eteocles* belongs.

Joc. But he's belov'd by all.

Pol. Belov'd by all!

Then 'tis a Tyrant whom they love and chuse,
Who guards his Scepter, and maintains his
Throne

By Means as vile as he usurp'd 'em first.

By Contraries his base Ambition acts;

To be my Tyrant, he's his Subject's Slave.

To those he fawns with Arts to which a Man
Honest and Brave would scorn to owe a Crown:
And, at the Sacrifice of all 'tis worth,
He barter for a despicable Power.

Joc. Has then this impious Strife so many
Charms,

The Sweets of Peace are tasteless to your
Thoughts?

Is not your generous Spirit large enough

To give Regard to Pity's tender Call,
And spare your Mother's Tears, and Country's
Blood?

Ant. Ah! if his Soul is Marble to those Sighs,
What can I hope from Friendship's weaker Plea?

That

The FATAL LEGACY. 37

That Love his happy Sister once could boast
Is lost, translated to a sanguine Aim :
He's charm'd with Blood, the scarlet Object
takes,

And fiery *Polynices* is no more
Th' affectionate, the soft, endearing Brother ;
He eyes us both with a disdainful Look.

Pol. Add not that Guilt to my afflicted Soul,
Say rather, Sister, say that you are chang'd ;
Say that th' Usurper of my Right and Throne
Has ravish'd from me what I valu'd more
Than Scepters, Crowns, or Gems, a Sister's
Love.

Ant. Is this the Love you bear me, cruel
Wretch !

To see me plung'd in this Abyss of Woe ;
A bleeding Sharer in my Country's Wounds,
With that un pitying, unredressing Heart ?

Pol. Have I not juster Reasons to retort
Th' upbraiding Charge on you ? These earnest
Pleas

Are too too partial on my Rival's side.
What you request me, is to rob myself,
To drop a lawful Plea, and in return
Stamp Fool and Coward on my branded Name.
To what an Height of villanous Success,
Ye Gods ! this curs'd *Eteocles* has climb'd ?
'Tis your unjust Affection to his Crimes
That irritates my Sword, and stings me most.

Ant. Believe not that my Tears from Treachery flow,

They are no Intercessors for your Foes.
I wish for Peace, but wish it not on Terms
That injure you, you have been absent long,
And are a welcome Victor. Alas !

'Twould be Unkindness to depart so soon

As

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As your ambitious Warmth would spur you
hence :

Oblige us, *Polynices*, with your stay,
A few Days longer ; give us time to search
Some Method to procure a bloodless End
To these Distractions; is a Day of Truce
Too long a Pause from Murther and Revenge ?
Is this Request too great to be allow'd ?

Joc. What *Dæmon* urges you to go so soon ?
Do you desire Tranquillity, yet grudge
A single Day to fix the Happy Means ?
You'll see *Eteocles* dismiss his Arms.
He'd have you see it done, and you refuse.

Ant. Yes, Brother, he's of kinder Stamp than
you ;

With pious Care he dries my Mother's Grief.
Our Tears to-day disarm'd him of his Rage—
Have you forgot you call'd him Tyrant ? Think
Whose guilty Conduct most deserves the Name.

Pho. The Case is not so pressing ; but, my
Lord,

Your Safety may allow the Queen a Day
To try and perfect her pacifick Scheme,
On equal, just, and honourable Terms,
Both to your Country, and your own Renown.
But see ! this Soldier's Countenance and Haste
Forebodes the Horror of some new Alarms.



Enter Officer.

Offic. My Lord, the Armies are engag'd, the
Truce
Is vanish'd, and the Scene is chang'd to Blood.
The *Thebans*, headed by their King and *Creon*,
Ar-

The FATAL LEGACY. 39

Attack your Army, and discard their Faith :
The bold *Hypomedon* supplies your Absence,
And bravely stands the Shock of all their Power.

Pol. Madam, you see how much he values
Honour :

But Battle he designs, 'tis he attacks,
And thus I fly to meet him.

[*Exit with Phocias and Officer.*

Joc. O my Son !

My Son, my *Polynices*, whither rush you ?
Ah ! how my Tears and Cries are disregarded !
Follow, *Antigona*, and stay his Rage ;
Prevail on *Phocias* to divide their Swords.

*Oh that the Stars which thus for Ruin call,
Would be contented with Jocasta's Fall ;
That ravag'd Thebes no longer might bemoan
These guilty Contests for her doubtful Throne :
How pleas'd her Peace I'd purchase with my
Blood,*

*Shuice from my lib'ral Heart the purple Flood,
A willing Victim to my Country's Good !*

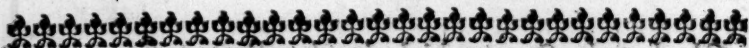
[*Exeunt.*



ACT



A C T III.



Enter Jocasta and Olympa.

Joc.



O, go, *Olympa*, see this Tragick Scene,

See if the bloody Combat still proceeds ;

If nothing can prevail to sooth their Rage——

'Tis said that *Artaban* designs to try.

Oly. On what Design he's bent I could not know ;

But an heroick Ardour fires his Cheeks,
And some great Purpose flashes in his Eyes.

'Tis ne'er too late to bid farewell to Hope,
Perhaps some Dawn of Comfort yet may rise.

Joc. O no, I will not flatter my Distress,
The greatest Comfort that the Wretched have
Is to behold their utmost Woes at once.

Go, bring me Tydings of this Day's Result:

Oly. But must I leave you in this Solitude ?

Joc.

Joc. This Solitude is a Degree of Bliss.
The pensive Cypress, and the silent Gloom
Are the Companions my Afflictions chuse.

[Exit Olym.

Is not the Store-house of celestial Rage
Exhausted yet, and must I still survive
To bear the Tortures of repeated Deaths,
Yet be forbid the Benefit of one?
How are your Thunders, Oh ye Gods, employ'd,
You cannot spare a single Bolt on me?
If I am guilty, Justice bids you strike;
If innocent, Oh! wherefore am I curs'd,
With Life imbitter'd with superior Woes,
To those the happier favour'd Damn'd bemoan?
My greatest Crime was Ignorance, and that,
Were you less partial, might admit Excuse.
I knew not, that this wretched, wretched Son
Possess'd my Bed; you brought him to my
Arms;
You bad us drink the Draught of horrid Love,
And you're the first to charge us for the Guilt
Your own Decrees forbad we should avoid.
If you delight in making Mortals err,
Can you not chuse out Instruments 'mongst
those
For whom the black enormous Lot has Charms?

Enter Antigona.

Oh! my *Antigona*, what have they done?
Have they perform'd their Fratricide? Oh!
speak.

Ant. Madam, another's Blood supply'd the
Place,

F

And

And has restor'd Tranquillity to you,
 And to the Nation Peace ; Peace to us all.
 The Gods are satisfy'd ; 'tis done, by Blood
 That's worthy of the Stem from whence it
 sprang.

I went to soften *Phocias* and my Brother,
 But hostile Rage had bore 'em distant far :
 I cry'd to stop 'em, and delay their Heat.
 Far from complying, with more furious speed,
 They hasten'd to the Battle. On the Tower
 I stood to wait th' accomplish'd Doom of *Thebes*.
 Her Citizens throng'd round with bleeding
 Hearts ;

And in that dismal Moment, to th' Amaze
 Of all the anxious Crowd, the Youngest, ah !
 The Youngest of our Line, brave *Artaban*,
 The worthy Brother of the generous *Phocias*,
 And the too glorious Son of such a Father,
 Warm'd for the Rescue of his suffering Country,
 Bravely advanc'd between th' encountring Hosts.

Joc. And did the noble Resolution draw
 The Armies to a Truce ?

Ant. Cease, cease, he cry'd,
 Inhuman Fiends, restrain your impious Swords ;
 The Soldiers heard with Awe th' illustrious
 Youth,

And with obedient Speed declin'd the Fight.
 Brothers, attend, says he, what Fate decrees,
 Expect from me a Period of your Woes :
 I am the last of the Imperial Blood,
 And Heaven requires the Purchase of your
 Peace

From me, receive then from this Patriot-Hand
 The willing Current of this ebbing Blood ;
 With that receive the Peace it flows to buy :

And

And then, with well-aim'd Lance, he sends
his Soul

T' acquaint the Gods their Orders were obey'd.
The *Thebans*, gazing at th' expiring Hero,
Observ'd with Dread the noble Victim die,
And moan'd their Safety at a Price so dear.

Joc. With equal Horror and Surprize, I hear
His brave Atchievement of unmatch'd Renown.
And is not this, ye Gods, Atonement full?
And has the Peace an Opposition now?
Sure this illustrious Victim will suffice
To answer your Demands of *Theban* Blood.
For, if, as well as Punishments, Rewards
Flow from th' impartial Ballance of the Sky,
What Crimes can swell to such prodigious
Height,

But must admit an Expiation here?

Ant. Yes, Madam, yes, a Recompence is sure,
To Virtue strong as this; the single Blood
Of one heroic Patriot is esteem'd
A Sacrifice more grateful to the Gods,
Than Seas of purple Tides from vulgar Veins.



Enter Eteocles and Creon.

Joc. Is't thus, my Son, that Kings regard
their Word?

Eteoc. Madam, this Fight proceeded not from
me,

But from the Soldiers, *Argives* as well as *Thebans*:
Who intermingling accidental Quarrels,
Rush'd without Order to the Field of Battle.
The Battle we must own was truly bloody,
And has decided now our jarring Cause.

When *Creon's* Son effus'd his willing Blood,
Both the encountring Hosts forbore their Arms;
This Prince, the last of our unhappy Line
Bravely explain'd the Oracle's Intent.

Joc. Ah, if your Country's Love alone inflam'd
Your virtuous Thoughts, and taught your swelling Soul

To disregard th' inglorious Baits of Life;
Let this Example damp Ambition's Fires,
And charm you to ascend the guiltless Steps
Of Honour, and in Fame's eternal Roll,
To shine for ever, shine, yet unoblig'd
To lay your valu'd Diadem aside.

Decline but only for a while your Claim
To absolute Possession of the Throne,
And you'll do more than *Artaban* has done,
And from your Country merit larger Praise.

Eteoc. This Instance of his Virtue warms my Soul

As much as yours, his glorious Death creates
A rival Inclination: Yet how'er
I must assure you, Madam, that a Crown
Is deck'd with more engaging Charms than Life.
A Thirst of Immortality has oft
Lifted the Brave to a Contempt of Death;
But Kings there are but few, that can descend
To pay Obedience where they have Right to
claim it.

This Prince has shed the Blood the Gods requir'd;

My Cousin could not without Guilt refuse
His Life a Victim to th' endanger'd State:
And that same State that did demand his Blood,
Demands that I should reign; and reign I will,
Till *Thebes* withdraws her Scepter from my
Hand,

And

And if my Absence only can appease
Her Troubles, let her ask it, I resign.

Cre. Since *Artaban* is dead, and Heaven would
have

No Victim but my Son, forbear, Great Sir,
To aggravate my Loss, in seeing you
Persist in this detested War, to risque
A Life of such Importance to us all.

And since he dy'd for Peace, in pity grant it :
Grant it, my Liege, to Millions of Desires.

Eteoc. But, *Creon*, why should I for Peace de-
clare ?

Cre. For having been too eager for the Sword,
You see into what Woes my Age is plung'd.
One Son is dead.

Eteoc. His Death must be reveng'd.

Cre. On whom should I revenge it ? On the
Gods ?

Eteoc. No, on your Foes. Your Foes are Foes
to *Thebes*,

And Foes to me ; on those your Vengeance light.

Cre. May it, for yours, and for my Country's
sake.

But Oh, my Lord, amidst those Foes I find
Your Brother and my Son : And can I spill
My own, or strike at your more valu'd Life ?

Yours is too sacred, and my own is dear ;
And must I be unnatural or prophane ?

Shall I be stain'd with Blood that I revere,
Or shew the rigid Sire in that I share ?

Joc. Since *Creon*, thou art flexible at last,
And our Woes touch thy sympathizing Soul,
The Blood of *Artaban* will sure prevail.

Let *Thebes* assure herself the generous Act
Has had its Aim ; the Thunder is recall'd,
Since Fate, a double Prodigy, has chang'd

Your

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Your Mind, the Current of our Blood is staunch'd.
 Peace from this Moment ushers in her Dawn,
 Since *Creon* does invite the Goddess down,
 She'll come and shed her silver Beams on *Thebes*.
 'The Planet that has conquer'd *Creon*'s Soul,
 By Consequence on *Polynices* gains.
 Let such a Change as this disarm your Rage;
 Quit, quit this Chase of your Ambition's Guilt;
 Comfort your Mother, comfort *Creon*, spare
 My Son to me, and *Phocias* to his Father.

Eteoc. Howe'er you judge it, Madam, I must
 beg

Your Leave to be the Master of myself.
 You can't but own what *Polynices* wants;
 He wants the Throne; nor thinks on his Return,
 But with the Ensigns of Imperial Power.



Enter Attalus.

Attal. May it please your Majesty, an Herald's
 come

From *Polynices*; his Commission is
 To ask an Interview: But for what Reason
 Is told not: He, however, does appoint
 To attend you here, or in the open Camp.

Cre. Doubtless he's weary of this lingering War,
 And his Ambition cools to easier Terms.
 By his last Battle he has learnt to-day,
 That you're as potent for a lengthen'd War,
 As he. The *Argive* Troops are tir'd with Blood:
 Besides, I've lately heard his Marriage-Father,
 Preferring Softness, and an easy Reign
 To the Fatigues of a successless War,
 Has given him *Argos*, keeping to himself

Mycena:

Mycena : And how'er his Courage swells
To brave Atchievements, 'tis his View to make
A fair Retreat, and from the doubtful Siege
Draw honourably off. Since then he asks
An Interview, believe he asks in that
For Peace; this Day is the decisive Day,
Either to end or break it off for ever.
Be it your Part to keep him in this Aim,
And second his Design; permit him all
That he demands, except the Diadem.

Eteoc. He demands nothing but the Diadem:

Joc. However see him, see him, Son, at least.

Cre. Yes, see him, since 'tis his Request. You
two

Will more contribute thus to re-unite
The Royal Blood, than all our Schemes contrive,
And on its proper Basis fix the Throne.

Eteoc. Let's see him then i' th' Name of all
the Gods.

Joc. Stay rather here, and see him in this Place.

Eteoc. Well, Madam, be it so. Let all Security
Be granted to protect his Person. Come,
Let's go and meet this Hero.

Ant. Creon, ah!

If *Thebes* is settl'd in her wish'd-for Peace,
'Tis you, and only you compleat the Work.

[*Ex. Joc. Eteoc. Antig.*

Cre. Disdainful Princess! 'Tis not your Re-
gard

For *Thebes* that touches your relenting Heart—
This subtle Soul, that throws its flattering Baits
On him whom once she view'd with Eyes of
Scorn,

Is less concern'd for Peace than for my Son.
Soon shall we see if this Imperious Fair,
This scornful Lady, this *Antigona*,

Will

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Will equally despise a Throne as me.
Soon as the Gods have pointed out my Crown;
And bad me be your King, you'll see if *Phocias*,
This Rival Son, can disappoint my Love,
And force *Antigona* from *Creon's* Arms.

Attal. Who would not, with myself, be lost
in Wonder,
At such an unimagi'd Change as this :
That *Creon*, *Creon* should declare for Peace ?

Cre. Then 'tis your Thought that I design the
Peace.

Attal. My Lord, I now believe it, tho' before
I judg'd it the most distant from your Views.
Bury your Vengeance in Oblivion's Tomb !
The dying *Artaban*, all clad with Blood,
When for his Country's Peace he gasping lay,
Display'd not more exalted Worth ; for he
That for the publick Welfare can decline
A just Revenge, dares sacrifice his Blood.

Cre. Yes, the brave Man that can with ge-
nerous Ease
Resign his Enmity, and sheath his Rage,
And love his Foe, will find it no great Task
To court Destruction, and be fond of Death.
But can I fight against my rising Spleen,
Curb Nature, and be deaf to my Revenge,
And hold my Shield before my Adversary ?
My Son to *Polynices* ow'd his Death,
And shall I be the Guardian of his Murtherer ?
But grant I could renounce the Cause of Ven-
geance,
Yet there is something of more Sovereign Price :
Can I forbear to love a Diadem ?
No, no, I am unutterably bent
Warmly to follow Grandeur and a Crown.
A Crown first kindl'd my exalted Aim ;

My

My Ancestor's great Blood conducts me up,
The Royal Steps, and leads me to a Throne:
With my first dawning Eyes I saw its Lustre,
Play'd with the Scepter in my Infant Hands;
And fix'd my Hopes upon the Royal Robes;
I blow these Royal Brothers quenchless Hate,
And my Ambition authorizes theirs;
I make *Eteocles* usurp the Throne,
The better to secure it to myself.

Atal. But why, if War's so prosperous to
your Schemes,

Why do you urge them to forbear their Arms?
Why, if their Jars do favour your Designs,
Do your mysterious Counsels wish their Union?

Cre. Because continu'd War destructive proves
To more than to my Foes, and angry Fate
Turns all my own Artillery against me.
On my Account the War did first commence,
When, for the Torture of my Soul, my Son
Abandon'd me to follow *Polynices*,
And I became a Foe to my own Blood.

In short, I on that very Day dissolv'd
The Truce, I kindl'd all the Camp to rush
To fight; both sides were beaten, but at last
My Son turns Desperado, spills his Blood,
And ceas'd the War I forwarded: But still
Another Son remains, and I must own
I love him, tho' rebellious as he is:
Nay more, the only Rival of my Schemes.
I would destroy my Foes, and yet not him:
'Th' Expende would be too great to lose two
Sons.

The Hatred of the Princes swells too high
To think they'll ever soften into Love.
I'll still augment the Venom, fret the Sore,
That both shall rather perish than embrace.

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Attal. And yet, Sir, you've propos'd the
Means they should.

Cre. All other Foes bear transitory Rage,
But when the Links of Nature are dissolv'd,
There's nothing can repair the furious Breach.
A Brother's Hatred swells to th' utmost Madness;
But Distance still diminishes their Rage:
Let it not shock you then at my Design;
When I propos'd their Meeting, it was this,
That at each other's sight, the kindl'd Spleen
With reassembl'd Fury may revive.

Attal. My Lord, yourself
Should be the only Object of your Dread.
For those who plume with an ill purchas'd
Crown
Are loaded more with Curses, than its Gems.

Cre. No, *Attalus*, when settl'd on a Throne,
And Royal Purple awes the kneeling Subject,
Far other Thoughts possess Imperial Heads;
Remorse is distant from the regal Brow.

*Let Fortune my aspiring Genius bless,
I'll justify my Treason by Success.*

[*Exeunt.*]



A C T



ACT IV.

Enter Creon and Eteocles.

Eteoc. **T**HIS is the Place assign'd,
and here we'll wait
His coming, but bear Wit-
ness that I swear
He shall gain nothing by
this Interview.

I know what *Polynices* is, I know
The settl'd Malice of his canker'd Mind:
And as for me, I'm parallel with him
In Hatred, tho' he was compos'd of Gall.

Cre. But should his Reason condescend to
yield
The uncontested Scepter to your Hands,
You can't but cease your Anger in return.

Eteoc. I cannot answer that my Heart will
then

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Lessen its own Resentment ; 'tis eternal.
 'Tis less his Pride than Person that I hate :
 Our near Alliance is the Bane we curse ;
 No short-liv'd Rage. Reciprocal Abhorrence,
 Drawn from the Spirits of consummate Spleen,
 And rivetted by long revolving Years,
 Works in our Souls, and flames mutual Ven-

geance.
 Our Cradles knock'd each other, and our Nurses,
 As stung with Scorpions, quarrel'd at their
 Tasks.

But now the Infant Malice is Mature,
 And shall perhaps continue in the Tomb.
 I'm sorry that he quits the Empire now ;
 No, no, I'd have him fly, and not retire.
 Creon, I would not hate him thus by halves.
 Nay, if my Skill foresees, you'll find that still
 He keeps a Vulture's Eye upon the Throne.

Cre. If his ill-founded Hopes still that way
 soar,

Tame him, great Sir, and learn him his Mistake.
 Proud of himself and furious as he seems,
 Insensible to Right, or Reason's Call,
 Shew him the pointed Steel, and lifted Arm,
 Can reason best. Fond as I am of Peace,
 I'll be the first to re-assume the Sword ;
 And tho' I gave my Vote to close the War,
 My Vote is that the Scepter should be yours.
 For ever let the War be re-inflam'd,
 Never, Oh ! never let the Sword be sheath'd,
 Till Peace with *Polynices* is confirm'd
 On Terms less cruel to ourselves or you.
 His Presence would envenom all our Joys ;
 Give us your Sight, great Sir, and give us War,
 More grateful than the Charms of such a Peace.
 The People have made me their Oracle,

My

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My Words are theirs, and I'm the Mouth of
Thebes.

Submit not at this ignominious Price
To give to *Thebes* a Peace she scorns to take:
Maintain the Throne for her and for yourself,
And let us have the Monarch we desire.



Enter Attalus.

Eteoc. Well, *Attalus*, my Brother is arriv'd.

Attal. Yes, with the Queen and Princess he
attends you.

Eteoc. Let 'em then enter: How my boiling
Rage

Heaves my indignant Heart at his Approach!
[*Aside.*

Cre. Ah, here he is. Fortune compleat my
Scheme!



*Enter Jocasta, Polynices, Phocias,
Antigona.*

Joc. My Wishes have their full Enjoyment
now,

From the propitious Stars I'll ask no more,
Since they have granted me my Age's Prayer,
In the restoring both of you together.

You see, *Eteocles*, you see your Brother
After the Absence of two Years return'd
To the same Palace where you both were born;
And I, by a peculiar Turn of Fate,
And Kindness of the Gods beyond my Hopes,

Can—

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Can now embrace you both, and both together.
Begin, begin, my Son, begin th'Embrace.
Whence come these cloudy Brows and gloomy
Looks ?

The one attends till the other will begin ;
And in the Affectation of the Honour
Of taking and not giving the Embrace,
Both hesitate, and neither will be first.
Strange Folly, unaccountable Ambition !
Where the most Surly passes for a Brave ;
Tho' he that conquers in this foolish Struggle,
Instead of an Applause should blush at such a
Conquest.

He that's first conquer'd is the generous Hero,
Merits by being vanquish'd—Let us see
Which has the greatest Courage, who's the first
That can subdue his Spleen, and give th'Embrace.
What, neither stir ? Your Duty's to advance,
[to Eteocles.

And since he comes from far you should begin.
Come, *Polynices*, then do you begin,
And shew him how——

Eteoc. Why this mysterious Talk ?
Madam, all these Embraces shew no more
Than bending Poppies, or the bowing Reeds,
That only take their Motions from the Wind;
Or couchant Flatterers, that mean no good
When they caress you, and the Ponyard's hid.
E'en let him speak, explain himself, and leave
Me to repose and canvass what he says.

Pol. What need I farther to explain my
Thoughts ?
They may be known by what has pass'd already.
War, Tumults, Battles, such a Sea of Blood,
Sufficiently declare the Throne's my Due.

Eteoc.

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Eteoc. This War, these Tumults, Battles, and
this Blood

That has so often purpl'd *Theban* Ground,
All these sufficiently declare the Throne
Is mine, and while I breathe, shall not be thine.

Pol. Thou know'st that thou unjustly art poss-
sess'd.

Eteoc. Injustice pleases if I chase but you.

Pol. If you would pull me down, you too may
fall.

Eteoc. And if by thy curs'd Hands the Gods
should plague me,
Yourself shall share the Ruin you create.

Joc. How cruelly have you deceiv'd me, Gods!
Have I not press'd this fatal Interview,
And is't to disunite 'em still for ever?

Ah, Children, ah, is this your Method, thus
To talk of Peace, and to cement your Feuds?
Quit, in the Name of *Jove*, your tragic Thoughts;

Rekindle not those Discords that are past;

You are not here as in an hostile Field;

Am I the Cause of your reviving Quarrels?

Think on the Place where first you drew your
Breath,

Has not its Sight some Awe upon you Minds?

'Tis here, 'tis here you first beheld the Sun,

And enter'd in the Catalogue of Princes;

All this speaks nothing here but Peace and Love;

These other Princes, and your Sister too,

Abhor you for a Hatred so unmatch'd.

And even I myself, who for you both

Beyond maternal Agonies sustain'd;

I, who would die to re-unite you. Ah,

They turn their Heads aside, disdain to hear,

And no more listen to the Voice of Nature.

And you, whom I esteem'd of softer Soul. [*to Pol.*

Pol.

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Pol. I seek for nought but what himself engag'd ;

And without Perjury he can't detain
The Throne, and longer bar me of my Right.

Jac. Extremity of Justice sometimes is
Extremity of Injury. The Throne
Is, I confess, your Due ; but you, we fear,
In mounting would overturn it. Will you ne'er
Cease from pursuing this unnatural War,
Will you without Compassion ravage all ;
Destroy the Realm with a Pretence to gain it ?
And would your Reign begin on Carcasses ?

Thebes dreads with Reason such a scepter'd Hand ;
That fills her City with her slaughter'd Sons,
Will she obey your arbitrary Laws,
Who was her Tyrant e'er you was her King !
And came not clad in Purple, but in Blood.
Gods, if 'tis usual thus when Greatness comes,
The Dignity attracts a Train of Grimes ;
If Virtue sinks, the more they rise in Grandeur,
Ah, what will you be, when you come to reign,
Since you're so cruel ev'n before the Crown ?

Pol. Well, if I'm cruel, 'tis not my Desire ;
Others Injustice 'tis that makes me so.
Of my own Actions I'm not Master, they
Who force me to this Ravage, bear the Guilt.
The People view me with unjust Abhorrence ;
I know 'tis fit my Country should be eas'd,
My sympathizing Bosom shares her Wounds,
And pants for her Redemption : Guiltless Blood
Has been already too profusely shed,
And I, to stem the fatal Current, here
Address me to the Author of her Woes,
And vow their Period from thy Blood or mine.

Jac. What, from your Brother's !

Pol. Madam, yes, from his.

*Tis

'Tis thus, and only thus the War can end:
For this I ask'd the Interview. Prepare,
Prepare, Usurper, to maintain the Wrong
That thou hast done me ; let thy Courage speak
thee

(Whilst from our single Swords *Thebes* waits her
Doom)

Worthy the Empire thy Injustice holds.

Eteoc. With Transport I accept the glorious
Offer,

Nay, if 'twas possible my Nature could
Admit of such a Change, I almost love thee.
For bearing Thoughts so suited to my own ;
Nearer ally'd by Hatred than by Birth !
I now believe thee worthy to dispute
The Sceptre that becomes the Hand that's us'd
To Steel, and I'll present you with its Edge.

Joc. With the same speed, ye Brace of Vipers,
come,

And in the Breasts you suck'd first plunge your
Swords.

Have you no Awe, that tells you I'm your Mo-
ther ?

And trace you not from that Relation, Ties
As near to *Polynices* ? Would you break 'em ?

Will you persist in thirsting for his Blood ?

Begin, and search it to its Source in me :

I am the common Enemy of both ;

Death must be shar'd betwixt us. Strike, strike
home ;

Your Vengeance must to both or neither reach ;

No single Guilt is worthy of your Aim,

Destroy your Mother, or preserve your Foes.

If Honour swells your Veins, or Virtue charms,

Barbarians, blush at this infernal Phrenzy :

Or if you are resolv'd to mate with Devils,

H

Blush

Blush that your Folly only sins by Halves ;
 Call it not Duty that restrains your Hands,
 In sparing me ; take care of doing that,
 For I may have my Fit of Vengeance too.
 Is't thus, O *Polynices*, that you treat
 Your Mother ?

Pol. 'Tis my Country that I spare.

Joc. And kill your Brother ?

Pol. 'Tis a Villain only
 That I would punish.

Joc. And his Death, alas !
 Will render you more culpable than he.

Pol. What, would you have me league against
 myself,

Sign to my own Dishonour, give Consent
 That he should shine with the imperial Beams,
 A proud, terrestrial Sun, from Court to Court
 Whilst I must stray, to hospitable Princes,
 A pensionary Burthen ? Shall I prove
 So conscientious and so meekly good,
 To be a Slave to Laws that he disdains !
 Sink Thought of utmost Horror and Disgrace !

Joc. But if the King of *Argos* should bestow
 A Crown upon you ?

Pol. Must I search a Crown
 From foreign Hands, when Fate allots me this ?
 In my Alliance to that generous Prince,
 Shall I shew nothing but an empty Title,
 The Shadow of a King ? Or shall I owe
 To his sole Bounty a precarious Throne ?
 I won't debase the Blood from whence I sprang ;
 Madam, in Justice to your own Renown,
 Where I derive my Birth, I'll owe my Sceptre.

Joc. Whether a Marriage, or a Natural Father
 Presents you this, the Value is the same.

Pol.

The FATAL LEGACY.

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Pol. Madam, the Difference would be vastly wide;

One would pronounce me Slave, the other King.
What, must my Grandeur from a Female Spring
Result, the Purchase of a Woman's Smile?

It is beneath my Honour to admit

A Title so effeminate : A Crown

From *Cupid's* Hand is despicably worn,

The fordid Consequence of an Embrace,

And must on each Love-Quarrel be withdrawn.

I'll ope' myself a Passage to a Throne,

Or never mount one ; and if e'er I should,

I'll fill it uncontroul'd. As for my Subjects,

They shall be Subjects in the strictest Sense,

No Law, no Arbitrator but their King :

For I myself will govern all myself.

Madam, I'll either be no King at all,

Or I'll exert him in th'unbounded View :

If my Blood's Title gives me not the Crown,

I will appeal to nothing but my Sword.

Joc. From your own Courage then derive one,
blaze

Above th'unactive Worth of common Sovereigns,

A Monarch of your own Advancement ; wreathe

Your Brow a Crown of Worth from brave Ex-
ploits,

And let your Actions shine amidst its Gems.

Display a Diadem of Laurels, won

By your illustrious Merit ; interwine

The Monarch's Purple, and the Hero's Fame.

Must this Ambition which bespeaks you born

To Ends more glorious, thus to Limits bend,

And deign t'accept an Empire of a Year ?

Seek, seek a Throne you only may ascend ;

A thousand Sceptres glitter to your Sword,

Without polluting 'em with Royal Blood,

H 2

Or

Or mounting to 'em over *Theban* Carcasses.
 Such Triumphs I myself will first extol ;
 And ev'n your Brother will unite his Arms
 To aid such honourable Conquests.

Pol. You'd have me busy'd in a Fairy Dance
 After imaginary Crowns, resign,
 To this base Rival of my Royal Hopes,
 The sweet Possession of one certain here.

Joc. If you would wish him such a Cloud of
 Woes,

If you would seek Revenge, you have it here.
 Yourself advance him to the thorny Height :
 This Throne was always an Abyſs of Horror ;
 Ten Thousand circling Precipices shew
 Repenting Royalty its rash Mistake :
 Your Father, and the Kings his Ancestors,
 No sooner mounted, but with headlong Ruin
 Fell sudden Victims to Ambition's Guilt.

Pol. Tho' I should meet the Thunder of the
 Sky ;

I'd thither rather mount than creep on Earth.
 My Heart, as emulous of those Royal Wretches,
 Would bravely raise itself, and join their Fall.

Eteoc. I'll spare you such a notional Distress,
 And so renown'd a Fall.

Pol. Thy Ruin first
 Shall learn me to regret my own the less.

Joc. My Son, his Reign is grateful to the
Thebans.

Pol. Yet, Madam, 'tis detestable to me.

Joc. He numbers all the People on his side.

Pol. And I the Gods on mine.

Eteoc. The Gods decreed
 To give your vain Pretensions to the Wind ;
 Since they have led me up to th' Empire first.

Well

The FATAL LEGACY. 61

Well they foresaw when they had made this
Choice,

That those who once possess'd the Reins of State,
Are deaf to all Persuasions to descend.

Ne'er saw we but one Master on the Throne ;
Howe'er extensive, 'tis too streight for two.

Judge then if all the Hurricane of War
This Wretch has cost me, does not amply shew
The Crown can ne'er become the Heads of both.

Pol. And as for me, thy Person's so abhorr'd,
I'd not partake with thee the common Air.

Joc. Go, Wretches, go,
And execute your meditated Murthers.
Since then I can't dissuade, I'll shew the way :
To this infernal Duel lead two Fiends,
That are my Sons. Why hesitate you ? Go,
And strive t' outdo your hellish Ancestors ;
Shew, in your mutual Madness, shew you're
Brothers :

The blackest Crime did introduce you both
To the abhorring Sun, and frighten'd Nature.
No longer I'll condemn the horrid Fury
That spreads its Venom thro' your fester'd
Veins ;

No longer have I Pity or Remorse,
For any Branch of my corrupted Blood :
By your Example I'm become a Tygres,
Into a Savage turn'd ; I've shook off Nature,
And I, I'll point you out your way to Death,
[Exit.

Ant. Ye Stars, what farther Woes do I be-
hold !

Pho. Alas ! can nothing move 'em ? Princes !

Ant. Brothers !

Eteoc. Let's name the Place for this decisive
Combat.

Pol.

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Pol. Thou shalt not have Occasion to upbraid
My tardy Rage. Let's fly. Farewel Sister.

Eteoc. Farewel Princess. [*Ex. Pol. and Eteoc.*]

Ant. Guards, stop 'em, force 'em to return,
Join your Entreaties and your Woes with mine.
'Tis cruel now to pay 'em your Obedience.

Pho. Madam, there's nothing can retard their
Fury.

Ant. Ah! generous *Phocias*, 'tis to you alone
That I am suppliant now. I beg, conjure you,
If Virtue is your Aim, if still undone
Antigona has Share within your Heart;

*If there's a Method can this Storm remove,
Now, now's the Time your Passion to approve;
Save them and me, and then I'll own you love.* }
[*Exeunt,*



A C T



ACT V.

Enter Jocasta, Raving and Bloody.

Joc.  FF, Wretches, off, and leave
me to enjoy
The pleasing Horrors of my
hast'ning Fate.
You say you will have Blood,
relentless Gods!

And here is some that's worthy your Demands.
My Sons shall not be favour'd to engross
The Guilt of Murder to themselves alone,
I am resolv'd to have my horrid Share.
Laius! Son! Husband! execrable Kindred!
Unbar th' infernal Gates to give me Entrance.
Let your dark World exult at my Approach,
And all Hell's Roof resound, *Jocasta* comes!
How's this! methinks the very Fiends avoid me!
Unwilling to cohabit with a Guest
Renown'd for Guilt so much beyond their own.
Turn

Turn not away, my *Oedipus*! I come not
To tempt you to the Crime of new Embraces,
But purge away the Foulness of our past.
Is Death so deaf he needs a second Summons?
This purple Current flows so slowly forth,
That it seems loth to leave my canker'd Veins.
Hark! some officious Foes will force Life on me:
But thus to disappoint 'em.— [*Stabs herself again.*]

Enter Antigona, Olympha, and Women.

Ant. Blast my Eyes
Blind as my Father, let me stray for ever,
Rather than see this Sight ! Consummate Hor-
ror !

Support her, call Assistance,— O my Mother!

Joc. Away, away, I want not mortal Help.
No, rather call the Furies to my Aid,
Let them accompany my Journey down
To their own Regions. Ha! is that my Daugh-
ter!

Thou see'st my Life on its departing Grasp ;
Yet I'd do something for thee—— Greatly
thought !

By all my Fondness for thee, I will leave thee
A Legacy more worth than thousand Empires,
This Dagger— If thy Woes should e'er arise
To vie with mine, use it as I have done. [*Dies.*]

Ant. Dire Present!— If my Woes should e'er
arise *[Takes up the Dagger.]*

To vie with thine, use it as thou hast done.
Oh Queen! Oh Mother! This distracting Sight
Makes 'em already equal to thy own,
And it is time to take thy Counsel now.

Why

The FATAL LEGACY. 65

Why do I loiter then, since summon'd thus?
 Why cannot I pursue the gloomy Path?
 What Motive keeps my rebel Nature back?
 My slaughter'd Kindred, who in Fate's dark
 Shades

Wait my Arrival, with Upbraidings tell me
 'Tis Love and *Phocias* keep me lingering here.
 Yes, I confess my unresolving Soul
 Declines at *Phocias*' Call, the dismal Brink.
 But lo! the dreadful Tydings of the Duel!

Enter Alexander.

Alexander, you have seen the Combat?

Alc. Madam, no.

By your Command I hasten'd, but in vain,
 'Twas all decided. But by the Reports
 Of the tumultuous Crowd, the King's no more,
 And *Polynices* is the Conqueror:
 They add, that *Phocias*' interposing Arm
 Suspended for a while the doubtful Fight:
 But Fate, and the two Princes' quenchless
 Hatred,

Made the Endeavours of his Virtue vain.

Ant. I doubt it not; as generous as brave,
Phocias could never stand with tardy Sword
 An unopposing Witness to their Crimes.
 Was it in Valour to prevent their Fates,
Phocias had done it; but their Fiend-like Fury
 Was not to be extinguish'd but by Blood.
 Oh! glorious royal Race! to distant Times
 Thy wretched Fame shall pass unrival'd down;
 The future Princes of the Earth shall read
 Thy guilty Annals with detesting Eyes.

66 *The FATAL LEGACY.*

O *Polynices*! thy abhorr'd Success
Has for its Punishment obtain'd a Throne
Where none will envy thy Possession, none
Plume with ambitious Hopes to be thy Heir.

Oly. Yet Fortune has in this been less severe;
Had *Polynices*, whose more favourite Claim
Your anxious Bosom held in most regard,
Been the successful Combatant, you then
Would have had Reason to lament his Fall,
More than his Conquest now.

Ant. Olympia, no.

'Tis true, he shar'd the Friendship of my Soul,
And left his Brother but the second Place
In my Esteem; and that by which he gain'd
My Heart the more, was that he was most vir-
tuous,

As well as most unfortunate: But now
From this Success he lessens to my View;
The brave, th' oppress'd, the virtuous *Polynices*
Is in the Murderer's impious Triumphs lost.
Hence I discard him from my loathing Breast;
His slaughter'd Brother's Shade supplies his
Place;
In being wretched, he's become belov'd.



Enter Creon.

Cre. Why this is more than my Ambition
with'd. [*Looking at Jocasta.*
My Sister breathless! Well, there's one the less
Left to upbraid me with my Guilt's Success.
But to my Purpose with the Princess now.
I need not, fair *Antigona*! enquire
What new Affliction waters those bright Eyes,
Since

The FATAL LEGACY. 67

Since the sad Cause is here too well explain'd.
Ah, Madam, now 'tis true the Gods are cruel!

Ant. Creon, impute this Chain of Ills to none
But to their Author, and from thence abhor
Thy own infernal Arts, and gloomy Mind.

A Victim to thy Pride my Brother fell:
Add not Prophaneness to thy other Crimes;
Blame not the Gods, nor lay it on the Stars;
There's not one Planet Partner in the Guilt.
You to this fatal Duel led the King;
He follow'd your Advice, Death follow'd that;
But think not thou shalt triumph unpursu'd,
By angry Justice and th' offended Gods:
Read in my Brother's Fall thy own, nor hope
T' escape thy Share of Woe.

Cre. In this Day's Slaughter
I have already felt it, since condemn'd
To mourn two Sons, as you two Brothers.

Ant. Ah!
My Brothers and your Sons! I th' Name of
Heaven

Where tends this Mystery of Horror? speak it,
While yet I have remaining Life to hear thee,
Resolve the Fears thy Words have rais'd with-
in me.

Tell any but the King?

Cre. Now, now's the Time.
To pay myself my promis'd Score of Vengeance
For her Neglect of all my Vows of Love.
I will refine upon the shocking Tale,
And make the horrid Scene more horrid still:
And wound her in her very tend'rest Part,
Her foolish Passion for my rebel Son. [*Aside.*
Alas! your Bosom has as yet escap'd
The Wounds this sanguine History will give it.

68 *The FATAL LEGACY.*

Ant. I know that *Polynices* bore away
The Laurels of their impious Combat, know
That *Phocias* strove to separate their Swords,
But still he strove in vain.

Cre. How *Phocias*' Name
Quick rises on her Tongue! Her amorous Heart
Is most solicitous to know his Doom:
Make that the Hint to torture her, good Brain.
[*Afide.*

Madam, the Fight was more inhuman far
Than Thought can image to the worst Despair.
Death made a Banquet; its rapacious Jaws
Disdain'd to take a single Victim in.
The Rage with which your Brothers parted
hence,
Wing'd 'em impatient to the Place of Combat;
Between both Camps they chose the horrid Spot.
How they began the Fight, ye Furies speak it;
You only can relate, what only you inspir'd.
Who, tho' of Hearts of Adamant, but lost
Their savage Temper, melting to behold
Nature thus butcher'd by her impious Sons!
The Rage of Lyons, when in Hunger's Pangs
They from each other's Talons snatch the Prey;
The Force of Whirlwinds, and the Roar of Seas,
Are to the Heat of this Encounter calm.

Ant. Good Heavens! And were there none
that durst exert

The Patriot, and oppose their Hellish Aim?

Cre. All that his Valour, or your own Com-
mands

Could urge him to, th' unhappy *Phocias* try'd.
Undutiful and Rebel as he was,
His Fate demands the softning Father's Grief.
He threw himself between their Fury, join'd
Force with Entreaties to divert the Deaths

Their

The FATAL LEGACY. 69

Their lifted Sabres threaten'd to exchange.
 His valiant Friendship was repay'd with Threats;
 Still he persisted; till at last the King
 Push'd his fierce Javelin with accurst Success;
 And whether at his Brother or my Son,
 He aim'd its fatal Fury, *Phocias* fell
 A Martyr to his Virtue and his Love.
 Thanks to my good Invention, I've dispatch'd
 My Rival; give her Time to relish that,
 And my own Love may take a better Turn.
[*Afide.*]

Ant. Poison! Distraction! But no more, my
 Heart;

Down, Down, and keep thy swelling Anguish in,
 Nor let this Hypocrite insult thy Woes.

Cre. Faintly discerning me, with ebbing Voice
 And soft'ning Tone, he cries, I die too happy
 To have this Honour in my parting Breath,
 To die for such a Princess as *Antigona*.
 Nor fell he unreveng'd, for *Polynices*
 With Rage redoubl'd for his slaughter'd Friend,
 At last forc'd doubtful Fortune to his Side,
 The King receiv'd a Thrust that pierc'd his
 Loins,
 And Conquest flew on *Polynices*' Plume.

Ant. Then *Polynices* triumphs?

Cre. Princess, no.

Puff'd with his dire Success, the Conqu'ror
 view'd

His Royal Victim with insulting Eye,
 And seem'd to feed with Transport on his Blood.
 Now, Tyrant, says he, now the Kingdom's
 mine,

See Conquest and see Empire in my Hand.
 Go to the Shades all cover'd with a Blush
 At the Success of my victorious Arm;

And

70 *The* FATAL LEGACY.

And yet, to aggravate thy dying Gasp,
Traitor, remember that thou dy'st my Subject.

Ant. O horrible to Nature!

Cre. Thus he stood;

Th' insulted King, with Glowings of Revenge,
Observ'd his Pride, and feigning instant Death,
Ensnar'd th' exulting Conqueror to his Reach;
And in that Moment, when the inhuman Brother
Stoop'd eager to disarm th' expiring King,
He stabb'd him to the Heart, and straight his
Soul,

Glutted with Vengeance at th' accomplish'd
Push,

Rush'd from its Corse, and flew with Joy away;
While *Polynices*, at the fatal Wound
Groan'd deep, and furious, made his Tour be-
low.

Ant. The dread Narration is concluded now.

But, *Creon*, know the Oracle's Intent

Is left unfinish'd yet; our Royal Kindred

In vain have bled, in vain have paid their Debt

To Fate's Demands: Heaven's Vengeance still
impends

O'er *Thebes*, while we survive; but you, indeed,
Have something may allure you to sustain

The Guilt of Life, the Kingdom now is yours:

Unrival'd you ascend the Royal Steps,

The Throne waits for you, and the People call
you.

Go, take possession of your traitorous Purchase,
And satisfy their Wishes and your own.

Cre. You bid me, Princess, to enjoy my
Wishes,

'Tis in your power alone to make me do it,

'Tis not the empty Throne to which they tend,

Unless you'd deign to be my Partner there.

Ant.

The FATAL LEGACY. 71

Ant. I would refuse it from the Gods themselves,

And dare you offer me the impious Bribe?

Cre. I know this Summit of Imperial Pride
Has, in the Circle of its Glory, nought
But sinks beneath the Lustre of your Eyes.
I'm conscious, I'm unworthy of the Bliss,
To which my Love aspires. But shew me,
Princess,

Th' illustrious Path thro' which I may arrive
At the deserving Height, and by the Gods
Alcides' Toils shall be outdone by mine.

Ant. Would you atone the Mischiefs you have
wrought,

By worthy Means surmount my just Disdain,
There is one way; — observe, and copy me.

Cre. What would I not resolve for such Re-
wards!

I am impatient to be happy— bless me
With your Commands.

Ant. They shall attend you soon. [Exit.

Attal. Think you, my Lord, her Hate will be
remov'd?

Cre. Think you she's like her Sex? She's
mine as firm

As my Extravagance of Love could wish.

She pauses, she deliberates, she yields—

Well-manag'd Story of her Lover's Death!

That Masterpiece of Thought has gain'd me all!

Dear *Attalus*, my Fortune's in her Zenith,

Shines full Meridian, and in perfect Noon.

I ask'd of Heaven a Princess and a Throne,

It gave a Scepter and *Antigona*.

And, in one Day to crown my Head and Love,

It made two jarring Passions aid my Schemes.

It lenify'd the Sister to my Hopes,

And

And harden'd the two Brothers ; it enhanc'd
And whetted their Resentments, soften'd hers,
And at once gave me Entrance to the Throne,
And to her Heart.

Attal. 'Tis true, my gracious Lord,
All things seem prosperous to your Wishes,
but——

Cre. But—— I'll allow no Obstacle to bar
The glorious Prospect of my coming Joys,
No, let me plunge into a Sea of Transport,
Display a Mind deserving my Success ;
Discourse of what I've gain'd, not what I fear.
Talk of my Throne, talk of my *Antigona*.

Attal. My Lord, behold *Alcander* drown'd in
Tears !



Enter Alcander.

Alc. Horror on Horror !

Cre. What portend these Sounds ?
Resolve me, is *Antigona* the Cause ?

Alc. Alas ! my Lord, your Fears suggest too
true.

Cre. Then Heaven is Heaven no more ; it
cannot be.

Alc. Soon as she parted hence, as if her Mind
Had long before resolv'd the bloody Deed,
With the same Ponyard that th' expiring Queen
Bequeath'd her as a Legacy to use
Just in the last Necessity of Woe,
Her dauntless Arm made Passage to her Heart.
See where she welters in her Blood, and lies
Like Roses strew'd on Snow. Ne'er did Death
look

So

So shocking and so beautiful before.

Cre. Well then, thou'rt fled, thou scornful
Beauty, fled :
Thy cruel self hast darken'd those bright Eyes,
And shut 'em from the Sun, and Earth, and
me.

Disdainful Girl ! you hasten'd to the Grave,
More to shun *Creon*, than to follow *Phocias*,
Curst Policy, by my own Arts undone !
And did I feign his Death for this Event ?
Think not, proud Beauty, to escape me thus,
I'll follow you below ; from Gloom to Gloom
I'll go, and spite of you, I'll gaze upon you ;
And you shall always have before your Eyes
The Object of your Hatred and Disdain.
My Sighs shall always eccho Love and Woe,
And tell my Pains to your unwilling Ears,
And if they cannot soften, shall torment.

Attal. Alas ! my Lord, I tremble to behold
The desperate Rage that flashes from your Eyes.

Cre. Hence with thy foolish Fears. I can
Dæmons fear ?
I'm turn'd one—Furies, Vengeance, Thunder,
Hell !

Come and assist me in this fatal Period.
Come, and shut up th' abominable Light ;
Take from these loathing Eyes the Sun away ;
Shut up my Eyes indeed—For ever shut 'em,
Rather than let me view what Hell produces.
Who's there ? The eyeless *Oedipus* ! To me
Comes he ? What fatal Errand is he charg'd
with ?

He is not fit to be my Guide below,
Who gropes his Way himself. No, here they
come

[Thunder and Lightning.

K

That

That more accuse me.— Do you want the Crown?

I'll keep it in Compassion, to prevent
Your Quarrels for't below — *Jocasta* too!
Hell will be empty if they come too fast,
Are you not most amaz'd?

Attal. We are indeed;

To see your noble Senses thus misled,
To hold Discourse and quarrel with the Air.

Cre. Look, look again! Is that Chimæra too?

Antigona! O Princess! beauteous Shade!

More welcome, tho' more fear'd than all the
rest!

Who would not be as deep in Guilt as I,
To have his Levee throng'd with Guests like
these?

Darkness envelope me, I can no more
Sustain the Flash of those accusing Eyes,
The same contracted Brow, and Air of Scorn,
As, when alive, she heard me sigh in vain.
Yes, I'll obey thy Summons, barbarous Fair;
Shew me no longer those upbraiding Wounds;
I'll give you ample Vengeance, Blood for Blood.
What, going? Thus, to bear you company.

[*Stabs himself.*]

Attal. My Lord, what Frenzy is this?

Cre. Forbear your Aid;

'Tis not in Art to remedy this Blow:

I would not lose this promis'd Death for King-
doms.

Call it not Frenzy, *Attalus!* Alas!

'Tis but Repentance for an Age of Guilt.

Enter



Enter Phocias.

Pho. Fatal Continuance of the *Theban* Woes !
My Father weltring in his Blood !

Cre. Alas !

Why come'st thou to torment me with thy
Grief ?

I am, my Son, unworthy of thy Fears ;
Thy evil Fate too soon will give thee Cause
To curse thy Father, and abhor thy Being,
When thou shalt know by my curst Politicks
Antigona was sacrific'd ; I caus'd
Her Death by feigning thine. But Oh forgive
And pity me, since I am going now
To make the same Petition to the Gods. [*Dies.*

Pho. Oh ! that Heaven's Mercy would as soon
acquit

As I, tho' made so wretched by thy Arts,
In losing (do I live to name my Loss !)

Antigona, the Price of Earth's whole Empire ;
Soul of my Soul, and my Heart's vital Blood.

Alc. My Lord, the *Theban* Crown devolves on
you.

Pho. Oh fatal Acquisition, dreadful News !
No, Sirs, recall your proffer'd Dignity,

*All Title to your Scepter I disown,
For a new Race reserve your dangerous Throne ;
'Gainst whom no Vengeful Oracle declares,
And whom no murther'd Laius calls his guilty
Heirs.* [*Exeunt.*

F I N I S.



Enter Phocas.

My Father weeping in his Blood!
Oe. Alas!

Why comest thou to torment me with thy
Grief?

I am, my Son, unworthy of thy Tears;
Thy evil Fate too soon will give thee Grief.
To curse thy Father, and savor thy Being,
When thou shalt know by my cruel Politics
Antagon was sacrificing; I can'st

Her Death by feigning thine. But Oh forgive
And pity me, since I am going now
To make the same Petition to the Gods. [Exit.
Oe. Oh! that Heaven's Mercy would as soon

As I, tho' made to wretched by thy Arts,
In losing (do I live to name my Loss!)
Amongst the Price of Earth's whole Empire;
Soul of my Soul, and my Heart's vital Blood.
My Lord, the Theban Crown devolves on

you.
Oe. Oh fatal Acquisition, dreadful News!
No, Sirs, recall your proffer'd Dignity.

All this to your Security I dissent,
For a new Race restore your dangerous Throne;
Grief upon no mortal Oracle declares,
And upon no mortal's Lips calls his guilty
Heir.

F I N I S



EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Mrs. BOHEME.



*Wonder, were the Project to be
try'd,*

*If we could lay these Epilogues
aside ;*

*Whether if I should sue for such a Favour,
You would not grant it on my good Be-
haviour.*

*For I (as one good Turn deserves another)
Could make it up, perhaps—one way
or other.*

*Well, you have heard a dismal Story
told,*

*Of strange Proceedings thirty Cent'ries
old ;*

Of

*Of Woes long since by Grecian Poets sung,
And Horrors acted when the World was
young :*

*But what's all this to us (methinks you
say)*

*And where's the Moral to this killing
Play ?*

*Why'tis to let our Christian Climate see,
There have been Times and Folks much
worse than we.*

*Theirs were unnatural Loves, and dire
Amours,*

*(Tho' Criminal perhaps) more Modish
ours.*

*Their Crimes drew down the Heav'n's
vindictive Summons,*

*Our Failing's greatest Terror's—Doctors-
Commons.*

*And bad enough: Love's Martyrs there
are taught,*

*That Slip of Nature——is no trivial
Fault;*

*The Spoiler there the Virgin's Wrongs
repays,*

*And swinging Vengeance on the Wife
that strays!*

Thus

EPILOGUE. 79

*Thus much for their Intrigues ; for State-
Affairs,*

*Our Age has tally'd pretty well with
theirs.*

*You see, they'd Men their Country would
undo,*

Rebellions, Plotters, and Pretenders too.

*All this is for our Epilogue Desert,
Now to my Bus'ness, for the Poet's Part ;
Who says, if poor Jocasta's wretched
State,*

*Guilty thro' Ignorance, and curs'd by
Fate,*

*Makes you account her Suff'rings too
severe,*

*Partake her Anguish, and relieve her
bere.*

